

## Main Topics

### Russia in Revolution; from autocracy to dictatorship 1881-1924

- **Challenges to the Tsarist State 1881-1906** : Nature of the regime, Economic & social changes, opposition parties, the 1905 revolution
- **Tsarisms Last Choice 1906-17**: The Dumas, Stolypin, impact of the war, downfall of the Romanovs
- **February to October 1917**: The Provisional Government & the Bolshevik coup
- **Holding onto and consolidating power 1918-24**: Civil War, changing economic policies, creation of soviet state

### Stalin's Russia 1924-1953

- **Struggle for power**: making of the new vozd 1924-29, personalities & policies
- **Transforming the soviet union**: collectivisation of agriculture & its social & economic impact, 5 year plans, changing social policies
- **Persecution and control**: origins & course of purges, culture & the arts in the service of totalitarian regime
- **Making of a superpower**: The Great Patriotic War, devastation, war production, victory

- **Nicholas II** came to throne in 1894. There were 100,000,000 peasants. Discontent in all classes of society with gov.
- **Autocrat** - not elected -> Absolute power. Believed had a divine right to rule, chosen by God
- Had a **council of ministers** who ran various gov departments but all reported to Tsar who made all important decisions.
- Russia so large - 100's of civil servants, **getting things done was slow**
- Civil servants carried out orders passed down to them however wages so low - **often bribery & corruption**
- No parliament to represent views of people, newspapers/books **censored, opposition not tolerated,**
- **Okhrana (secret police)** dealt with anyone criticised the gov. Spies and agents everywhere.
- If was strikes/protests/riots, soldiers particularly the feared Cossacks **restored order with great brutality.**

## "Was the Tsar fit to rule Russia?"

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# The Orthodox Church

### The Orthodox church

- Surrounded by **mysticism & superstition**
- Holy men (Startsy) held in special regard.
- Closely linked to Tsar & way of ruling. **Taught that Tsar also head of the church**, Gods chosen representative
- -> Hence many peasants thought of Tsar as 'little father' special protector.
- There was a big gap between poor parish priests and rich bishops & higher clergy.

- **Kind well meaning person**, deep affection for family
- **Did want to bring happiness & prosperity to people**
- **Very intelligent**, unusual memory, spoke Fench and German
- **People disliked him greatly** wanted reform but by revoking it worsened relations.
- Devoted to wife alexandra and children. **Would sooner spend time with family than deal with gov matters.**
- **Could also be cruel and merciless.** Would not stand for opposition, always turned to violence. **Anti-Jewish** encouraged progroms(attacks) against Jewish settlements.
- **Knew very little about people.** Did not visit villages/factories, recieved info from a small number of people who were happy to protect him from realities of life in Russia.
- **His wife Alexandra:** Very different personality - shy but strong willed, obstinate. Very religious, believed Tsar appointed by God, her duty to support him. In evenings **demande** he spend time with family, encouraged him to withdraw from public events to private family world.

## Konstantin Pobedonostsev

- Was the Governments leading official on religious policy
- Procurator of the synod - leads all orthodox churches.
- **Tutor** to both Nicholas II and Alexander III when they were children. Had an **anti-semitic** influence, made them oppose democracy.
- Leading thinker of Russian Conservatism, opponent of political change, **supported autocracy**

### 1855-1881

- Given title Tsar '**Liberator**' for his radical reform
- Most important reform **emancipation of Serfs 1861**
- Creation of elective local government - **Zemstva 1864**
- **Trial by Jury 1870**
- Creation of armed services
- Before death was on his way to sign law that would have given Russia its first national assembly
- Was unwilling to compensate on the principle of autocracy
- Increasing degree of radical oppression
- Population increased, **famine of 1891** can be blamed on him as built over the years
- Assassinated by terrorist group '**People's Will**' opposed autocratic rule of Tsars.

## Alexander III

- Had made it known that **didn't approve** of **fathers modernising policies**. Launched Russia on **return to conservatism**.
- **Russification** - Wanted a Russian community, everyone to speak Russian, all other languages forbidden in schools
- Poland and other Baltic lands were affected by this.
- Financial Repression - **Increased taxes/tariffs**
- Tried to reach positive trade balance to encourage trade with foreign countries.

## Minister of Finance 1892-1903

- Industry grew so quickly known as the 'great spurt'.
- **Gold standard introduced**, gave the Rouble a fixed gold content, gave strength when exchanged with other currencies.
- Believed the modernisation of the economy depended on developing an effective railway system.
- Enthusiastic, extraordinary development, can be known as transport revolution.
- **Created trans-siberian railway** stretched between **Moscow and Vladivostok**.
- Connected remote regions of central & eastern Russia to industrial west.

- **Was never fully trusted by Tsarist system** - made enemies easily
- Problem of minority nationalities remained same
- Russia became **too dependent on foreign loans** and investments
- Peasant community known as 'dark masses' were threat and kept in place with severe repression. Witte made **no attempt to improve situation**

- **Tariffs** he introduced resulted in making **goods scarcer more expensive**
- Gave priority to heavy industry, **neglected vital light engineering areas** e.g. machine tool production that would have helped modernise manufacturing.
- Trans-siberian railway proved to be **more of a symbol** of Russian enterprise than of any

- **Looked to peasants** as political basis of future society.
- Wanted to replace autocracy with a gov system based on **independent peasant communities**, very local democracy, make strong central gov fade away
- Peter Lavrov and Nikolai Chaikovsky were Uni students who wanted undergrads to go out in Russian countryside & gain peasant support - failed as peasants still believed that Tsar had best interests at heart.
- Some populists arrested / imprisoned
- in 1879 more radical populists took more extreme tactics. **Formed the 'People's Will'** aimed to assassinate members of Tsar. - Most nobel victim was Alexander II in 1881

## Kadets

**The Liberal Constitutional Democratic Party**, led by Pavel Miliukov

Largest of the liberal parties, most outspoken critics of Tsarist system

Policies - Basic rights of citizens

- **All citizens equal before law**, all class distinctions & limitations of personal and property rights should be revoked
- Every citizen guaranteed **freedom of religion**
- **Freedom of the press**
- Right to **organise unions or societies** without permission

Main supporters:

- **Educated professionals, low level white collar workers, petty traders, artisans, shop clerks & some workers and peasants.**

## Social Revolutionaries

**Appealed mainly to peasants**, because of '**land socialisation**' - the transfer of land from private to public ownership.

Opposed the Tsarist regime, wanted to bring all parts of society together. This was because the Tsars believed that the lower classes deserved to be repressed after what happened to Alexander II. However social revolutionaries believed everyone deserved equal opportunities.

The party was made up of different parts, the **democratic socialists** and the **agrarian socialists**. Agrarian = agricultural, and democratic meaning people having a right to say how the country is run.

- Form one half of the **Russian Social Democratic Labour Party**. Bolshevik meaning majority because gained a higher amount of votes when party split in two (compared to Mensheviks).
- Lenin called for a small tightly knit force who would lead revolution on behalf of people.
- **Peaceful**, do not resort to violence
- Follow belief that **communism** best way forward.
- Bolsheviks idea = overthrow Tsar, gain power over Russia and its people.

## Short term

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- War -> food & fuel shortages, unemployment
- Nicolas II weak opposed to reform
- Poor harvests 1900 & 1902 -> starvation and violence in countryside
- Writtes industrialisation policy -> urban workers and peasants high indirect taxes and low wages.

## Mid term

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- Minorities wanted autonomy, end to Russification
- Peasants/workers grievances
- Repressive government
- Alienated intelligence - middle class liberals wanted to participate in gov, some form of elected national assembly

## Long term

# Causes of the 1905 Revolution

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## Mensheviks

- Formed **minority of Social Democrat party**.
- Wanted to make their movement **less elitist than Bolsheviks** in belief it would **attract workers & peasants**.
- Less disciplined approach to the revolution than Lenin had proposed. However approach was more open and initially got them more support than Bolsheviks.
- Slogan used by Mensheviks to attract supports: **"Eight hours work, eight hours pay, eight hours sleep and eight bob pay"**
- Skilled philosophers but failed to carry things out even at a basic level.
- Often disagreements within the party.

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to gov

- do it. Hoped would create new class prospering peasants - **Kulaks**, who would be **loyal**
- Stolypin introduced **reforms to make agriculture more efficient** - peasants allowed to **buy strips of land from neighbours**, set up peasants bank to provide loans for them to

Changes in Countryside

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- newspapers had white gaps where **censored**.
- press guaranteed in 1905 but newspapers often fined for articles offending gov, often
- **Okhrana had 1000's informers**, everybody had to carry internal passports. Freedom of executed, hangmans noose became **'Stolypin's necktie'**
- Tsar appointed **Peter Stolypin as Prime Minister** to deal with this - reputation for being tough, set up military courts, could sentence and hang a person on the spot. 1000's
- **continued in countryside** well into 1906
- Most the trouble in the cities had stopped by the end of 1905, but **violent disturbances**

Order and control

## Did life get better for Russian people after 1905?

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## Why the Tsar survived the 1905 revolution

- Different classes **did not unite** to fight Tsar. so could be dealt with one group at a time.
- **Army remained loyal to tsar**, were promised better pay and conditions.
- Tsar issued **October Manifesto** promising a parliament and civil rights, gave many people what they wanted so stopped demonstrating, split groups, made easier for Tsar to regain control
- **Russo-Japanese war ended in Sep 1905** - allowed Tsar to bring troops back to European Russia and use them to put down riots
- Tsar **used brutal force** to bring Russia back under control, sent out troops to crush workers peasants and nationalities who still opposed him.



## The Dumas

- At **end of 1905 Tsar gave in to demands of parliament (Duma)** elected by the people. But **could not pass laws**, appoint ministers and could not control finance in important areas eg. defence. Tsar could dissolve it whenever he wished. Elections favoured nobles.
- However the **first two Dumas** were very radical, demanded **more power and rights** for ordinary people freedom to strike, free education, more land given to peasants. Tsar **dissolved both dumas** after a few weeks,
- **3rd Duma** 1907-1912 Stolypin changed way members were elected to favour gentry & urban rich more-> more conservative. Even so were still critical of gov, **some good measures passed** on matters to do with army navy and accident insurance for workers.
- **4th Duma** 1912-14 **achieved little** before war was declared, but at least Tsar starting to work with it.

- Wanted to create a **new class of capitalist peasants - Kulaks**.
  - Encourages them to both buy land and farm with modern methods
  - Introduced **low interest loans** so peasants could buy land.
  - Stolypin's necktie (noose) - Stolypin was **vigilant against opposition**, 1444 killed in 1907.
- duma - new electoral vote - ended up full of octobrists, if they didn't fully agree with his policies he would rely on decrees.

# Why did WW1 cause problems for the Tsar?

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## Why did Russia enter the first world war?

### Short Term

- **Franco-Russian convention signed 1892-** to avoid isolation Russia turned to France. Agreed each partner promised to give military support to other should they go to war with Germany.
- **Assasination of arch-duke ferdinand - In 1914** heir to Austro-Hungarian throne assassinated by Serbian nationalists. Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia -> **Russia forced to enter war to protect Serbia.**
- **Triple Entente - In 1907** Britain joined alliance between Russia and France. Agreed to stand together if 1 threatened. Two major powers falling into 2 sides: **Russia France Britain & Germany Austro-Hungary Turkey.**

### Long Term

- United Germany - Under Wilhelm II, adopted more aggressive form of diplomacy. Looked to unite with Austro-Hungary to exert influence over Balkans. **This frightened Russia into looking for allies in West.**
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- **Germanys mobilisation plans - Schlieffen Plan**, the idea that in the event of Russian mobilisation Germany would launch a **lightening strike on France** to defeat them before

**Nicholas II took direct control of army in 1915**, wanted to rally nation around him as Tsar. -> Became **personally responsible for fate of army.**

Growth of railways could not cope with demands of war. **Within 2 yrs of war system collapsed.** - > Goods piled at stations, food rotted before could be distributed, military could not be resupplied. **Moscow & Petrograd receiving under half the amount of grain they needed by 1917.**

Despite a few key victories **Russia began to lose war**, appalling casualty rates -> Early enthusiasm & high morale replaced by **pessimism**. Ill equipped peasant **soldiers began to desert in large numbers**. Good news for Bolsheviks who had been weakened by their anti-war stance in 1914.

Russia achieved remarkable **financial security by 1914, destroyed by WW1**. Between 1914 & 1917 spending rose by 30 mill roubles. Gov borrowed from abroad and put more notes into circulation -> In short term wages paid kept people happy in **long term money worthless**, inflation. Between 191 & 1916 average earnings doubled food and fuel quadrupled.

**Requisitioning of horses & fertilizer** by military made difficult for peasants to sustain agricultural output. When inflation hit in 1916 **began to keep food for themselves**. -> Army first take on supplies, ordinary Russians in city faced hunger. Petrograd 1917 bread rationing 1/4 of

## Petrograd, & Tsar Abdicates

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- Petrograd changed from German name St Petersburg
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- Crowded with war refugees and workers who had migrated to work in war industries
- Petrograd police dept reporting food shortages might cause a popular uprising.
- March 8th feminists paraded for freedom and equality, joined by striking male workers began marching & protesting yelling 'give us bread'.
- Size of demonstration on March 8th inspired larger demonstration march 9th
- 30% city's workers marched
- March 10th most of city joined demonstration, red banners 'down with the war'
- Nicholas recieved news of demonstration believed didnt matter, sent order forbidding any more demonstrations and assemblies. Early sunday morning march 11 posters plastered announcing demonstrations would be dispersed & all those not back at jobs by monday would be conscripted into military sent to front.
- Crowds tore down warnings. In afternoon military unit The Pavlovski Guard fired into group of demonstrators. killing 40/50 wounding others.
- Soldiers in Petrograd were in 30's and 40's, draftees or reservists unhapp about indignities suffering in military.
- Monday morning soldiers who opposed shooting civilians began shooting officers instead, officers fled

Originated from the failed June Offensive a failed offensive against Germany & Austro-Hungary. Lead to many desertions from army, starting point of collapse for Russian Army.

Significant for Lenin - he was in fierce opposition of war, could take advantage of humiliation & weakened PG by planning to take power.

3rd July disillusioned workers from Petrograd factories took to street protesting about PG. Clear these protests were orchestrated and stimulated by Bolsheviks (Lenin) however workers were only disillusioned not outraged enough to cause real revolution.

Because Bolsheviks were in a minority in the Soviet, many other political parties appealed with success to stop protesting. Did stop temporarily

4th July Bolsheviks rounded up support in new Petrograd factories, got 50,000 people rioting outside Tauride palace. Lack of communication -> no order to invade palace, crowd dispersed.

5th July PG restored order by sending soldiers from front into Petrograd.

6th July heavily armed greatly equipped soldiers surrounded Bolshevik HQ arrested 500 members,

# Land Question

Who should own the land? It was debated whether land should belong to aristocratic landlords or peasant who worked on it.

Problems that existed regarding the land:

- Much **debate & violence due to indecision**. Aristocratic landlords became incredibly wealthy b/c of Alexander II abolishing Serfdom. -> Land debate more heated, **peasants had to pay for freedom and to work on land**. -> Narodniki terrorist group gained great support from peasants, destroyed aristocrat homes & businesses & assassinated Tsar.
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What the Gov did:

- **1901 Socialist Revolution Party founded**, called for agrarian socialism. Were the largest party throughout 1917, before and after October Rev. But the PG **lacked ability to impose authority outside towns and cities**. Most of Russian countryside had no effective gov at all.

Bolsheviks took advantage:

- Lenin realised to **gain peasant support had to resolve land issues**. First Bolshevik decrees, made the day after the Oct rev, calling for an **end to WW1 & gave land to peasant soviets**